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National Machineries for Gender Equality and the Advancement of Women in Transition Countries (Central and Eastern Europe and the CIS) */

Prepared by the Regional Bureau for Europe and the CIS (RBEC)
United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
For the ECE Regional Preparatory Meeting
Geneva, 19-21 January 2000

A national machinery for the advancement of women is the central policy-coordinating unit inside the government. Its main task is to support government-wide mainstreaming of a gender-equality perspective in all policy areas (paragraph 201, The Beijing Platform for Action).

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Almost all countries in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) have in the past decade set up national machineries within government structures as part of the democratization and new state building processes. Created in the impetus of the Beijing Conference, most have since gained much experience. A majority of the region's national governments have established departments, commissions or committees on women's issues or gender equality in order to fulfil their international commitments and especially to meet the needs arising from democratization and the transition to a market economy. Also notable in this process is the lobbying role of emerging women's movements in the region to adopt and implement National Action Plans (NAP).

The region is varied, as are the experiences. Commissions for gender equality have appeared in the Baltic States and CEE countries, while in the Central Asian and Caucasian republics, national machineries are mostly created with the more specific task of improving women's status. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) advocates that the advancement of women be an integral element of the gender equality equation – a prerequisite for just and efficient growth in a democratic society where social cohesion exists. The advancement of women, therefore, is needed as a first and parallel step to the goals of gender equality, which should not be viewed as an external imposition, but as an integral part of development in CEE countries and the CIS. At the same time, each country should internalize this process and create mechanisms suitable to its own situation and internal dynamics in order to reach the common goals of equality.

In some countries of the region, ironically, the mere existence and often success of these national machineries have undermined the long-term goals of gender equality. For example, the creation of national machineries for women (or women and family) in marginalized structures sometimes leads to complacency with the status quo and, especially, a lack of responsibility for other governmental structures to actively and operationally mainstream gender into policy and planning. The separation of women's issues into stand-alone structures and, more importantly, their perceived unimportance or secondary status in times of political and economic transition could in fact undermine the goals of equality.

It is above all essential to put gender on the agenda by emphasizing the links between equality and long-term, strategic human development. Within this framework, it is important to realistically assess the function of national machineries in the region in the light of the situation of transition countries. What ultimately needs evaluating is a national machinery's capacity to demonstrate convincingly the importance of gender and to design efficient, transparent and inclusive national policies and programmes. But even if the machineries are considered "successful" in promoting the advancement of women

and in working with civil society per se, risks remain everywhere – be it the marginalization of women and, therefore, continued under-funding or tokenism, or a perceived competition with men or with a country's mainstream political and economic goals, which could ultimately have long-term negative effects.

In short, the political will to advance and promote women may exist in the countries of the region, whether for political or economic reasons, but the actual integration of gender equality at mainstream political and economic decision-making levels may come up against tough resistance. Despite many gains and, notably, a burgeoning partnership between governments and civil society thanks to the national machineries, most of the Platform's shortcomings identified in 1995 remain. Some are even the main obstacles in the region. For example, there is a lack of political commitment at the highest levels in countries where they do not exist and marginalization within government structures, unclear mandates, under-financing, inadequate staffing and lack of information in countries where they do exist. These undermine the effectiveness of national machineries in promoting the advancement of women and gender equality.

A. State Gender Policies in Transition Countries

A review of national machineries in the region should begin by discussing the transition to political pluralist democracy and a market economy in CEE countries and the CIS. Transition hardships have affected the most vulnerable (women, children and national and ethnic minorities), particularly the urban poor and rural populations. Overbearing political and economic problems, social strife, ethnic unrest and acute economic crises, resulting in the rapid decline of living standards, have lured attention away from issues of human development and, among them, the new status of women in society and gender equality.

Although substantial differences in gender status exist between countries, basic issues of gender equality are present, in one form or another, throughout the area. They are manifested in:

- The absence of women's participation in political decision-making;
- Undeveloped civil societies;
- Unstable and fragile economies and labour markets;
- Deteriorating social situations;
- Rising violence against women;
- Increased trafficking with women in the region; and
- Tense ethnic relations, including armed conflict.

Most countries do not actually have discriminatory legislation, but concrete laws and measures, like those for family planning and abortion in some countries, show regressive tendencies. Neutral legislation is the norm.

Positive legislation often appears on paper but with few mechanisms to monitor discrimination. Despite a general lack of gender statistics, there are more gender-specific data available now than at the beginning of the transition process.

Principles of gender equality appear in the basic legislation of most countries in transition and most have ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). Gender, however, is often not considered a priority in countries beset by socio-economic problems. Yet questions of equality – not only between women and men, but also among rich and poor and between minorities and majorities – are primordial to the success or failure of the transition process. Experts and some government institutions, under the influence of international trends and activities (such as the Beijing Platform of Action) are espousing the gender concept. In the CIS, in particular, the idea of "gender policy" is not yet used at government levels. Instead, there is talk of policies to improve the status of women in the region which, in a way, is simply a continuation of the priorities of the old system, which perceived the "woman question" as a responsibility of the state. The understanding and application of gender for development and human rights, however, is important both for democratization and for socio-economic stability, as it is a prerequisite for a sustainable growth.

National machineries, therefore, have a decisive role to play in putting gender on the agenda. What follows is a review of their strength and the challenges they are facing in the region.

B. National Machineries within Government Structures in CEE countries and the CIS

The appendix outlines the different types of national machineries in the region's governments. Most fall under these categories:

1. *Units of departments within ministries of labour and/or social affairs*. The majority of national machineries in the region are *gender equality units* or *departments* within these ministries, which are often given the overall task of coordinating women's or gender affairs within the cabinets. The location of these national machineries reflects governments' welfare approach to women. They are seen as a vulnerable group in need of protection as mothers. There is also increasing recognition that the labour market, if not regulated properly, could be the most discriminatory institution for women. The mandates of these departments are quite broad, especially if they are the only national machineries in the country. Such departments exist in the Czech Republic, Croatia, Estonia, Latvia, The former Yugoslav

Republic of Macedonia, Romania, Belarus, Russian Federation and Slovakia, with a focal point in Bulgaria.

2. *Women's committees or directorates under the Prime Minister's offices or other high-ranking cabinet members.* In the CIS, these committees were created during the structural reorganization of the old system, notably the Republican Women's Committees and Councils, such as in Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Tajikistan. Elsewhere, they are bodies or persons, directly reporting to the Prime Minister, which have a mandate to develop the gender policy of the state. They are in Albania, Turkey, Lithuania and Malta, which has a Parliamentary Secretary for Women's Rights within the Office of the Prime Minister.

3. *Women's committees or offices for the family created as stand-alone government structures within the cabinet of ministers.* These newer structures are increasingly being formed in restructuring states with the equivalent mandates of ministries, but at times without the necessary funding or staff. They are available in Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Ukraine and Poland as the Office of the Plenipotentiary for Families and in Slovenia as the Women's Policy Office of the Government.

4. *Commissions or councils, sometimes in addition to government committees, created in preparation for the Beijing Conference or to follow-up on the implementation and monitoring of the National Action Plan.* These inter-ministerial advisory commissions are appointed by the President or Cabinet of Ministers, include representatives from key ministries, NGOs and other institutions, and have a specific mandate to develop, implement and monitor the NAP. They report either to the ministers of social welfare or, as in the Russian Federation and Tajikistan, to the Deputy Prime Minister responsible for social issues. They have mostly an advisory and coordinating role and exist in Armenia, Croatia, Georgia, Russian Federation, Kyrgyzstan, Slovakia, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan, among others.

5. *Women's or gender equality structures established within national assemblies.* These include sub-commissions on equality or equal opportunity (Romania, Slovenia, Republic of Moldova) or commissions on women, sometimes including maternity and childcare (Tajikistan, Albania, Lithuania, Ukraine). Some parliaments have women factions (Russian Federation and Armenia, until the last elections) and others include informal clubs and roundtables (Estonia, Georgia, Poland, Lithuania).

6. *Other additions.* Divisions of gender statistics are increasingly being formed in national statistical agencies (Armenia and Lithuania, among others) and, although currently only in Lithuania, a new ombudsman on

equal opportunities has been established. Other ombudsman offices are looking to extend their mandates and equal opportunities legislation is being drafted and proposed in many countries of the region.

C. Location and Organizational Structures

When located at the highest level of government, under the responsibility of the President, Prime Minister or Cabinet Minister, national machineries possess the political authority needed to carry out their mainstreaming mandates across all ministries, including cross-portfolio work. Location, however, is only one prerequisite for success. Another is a clear mandate and the necessary capacity to coordinate, facilitate, support, and monitor the mainstreaming process in all ministries and agencies.

When located in a social ministry oriented towards welfare activities, such as the ministries of social affairs, labour and family, the national machinery has found it difficult integrating women's interests in the country's main development programmes. Support for women in such governments is viewed as support for their role as mothers and housewives – a welfare and women-in-development approach that has not integrated gender into long-term political and economic national strategies. Marginalization within these ministries has meant that national machineries have often lacked the political clout to raise gender issues beyond the purview of social, health and welfare policies.

The influence of the national machinery is often also based on the personality of its executive. Changes in leadership often lead to complete shifts in direction, strategy and staff. In countries undergoing swift management changes, the frequent restructuring of governments often interrupts the work of such national machineries, especially if they are marginalized and their functions not seen as priority.

National machineries, created with the specific purpose of implementing and monitoring the NAPs, are limited by mandate to the NAP time framework. And given that on average the region's NAPs are drawn up to the years 2000-2001, evaluations of the national machinery's work must begin as soon as possible. The evaluation process can be an optimal opportunity to expand the mandate of the national machineries beyond the monitoring of the NAPs to the mainstreaming of gender planning within government policies and programmes in general, which is a long-term and evolving objective.

D. Mandates and Functions to Promote Gender Mainstreaming

A clear mandate is a prerequisite for the efficient functioning of national machineries and includes:

- Development of policies in collaboration with appropriate ministries;
- Policy advocacy horizontally and vertically;
- Coordinating activities aimed at integrating a gender perspective in legislation, public policy, programmes and projects;
- Generating and disseminating gender disaggregated data and information for planning purposes, monitoring and evaluation;
- Monitoring programmes and policies for their impact on gender equality;
- Encouraging gender training at all levels of government and developing methods and tools for gender impact assessment, guidelines for gender training, and for gender auditing in all government activities; and
- Organizing public awareness campaigns and promoting various links and dialogue among government institutions and civil society, especially non-governmental organizations, and cooperating with the mass media to mobilize public opinion on gender issues.

In CEE countries and the CIS, however, the main challenges to the effectiveness of new national machineries often stem from a combined lack of clear mandates, experience, and human and financial resources. With these internal problems, it is often difficult for the national machineries to solicit high political support and authority.

The main task of the national machinery, according to the NAP, is gender mainstreaming. It involves applying a gender analysis methodology and lobbying to ensure that women's, as well as men's, concerns and experiences are an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes so that women and men benefit equally. The structure and functions of national machineries must be appropriate for achieving such gender mainstreaming.

Gender mainstreaming, however, does not replace the need for targeted, women-specific policies and programmes. With limited experiences and especially financial and human resources, however, the question remains whether it is possible for national machineries to combine their function as a policy advisory body with the actual implementation of policies and programmes. This choice is especially relevant for transition countries, given the lack of overall finances in state budgets and resistance to gender as a priority in socio-economic policy. Most progress in promoting gender mainstreaming in the region was achieved thanks to a clear division of responsibilities. National machineries were responsible for policy advice; other line ministries were in charge of mainstreaming gender into their sectoral areas; and NGOs and other groups of civil society had the power and capability to implement programmes and projects in partnership with governments. The separation of responsibilities has proven to be the most

effective way of using limited resources for long-term objectives and presents a new challenge for countries engaged in state building.

When national machineries have attempted to combine policy and implementation roles, especially without the active involvement of NGOs, the results have been clear: diminished effectiveness and competition and, ultimately, a wasted opportunity to concentrate efforts on influencing policies and plans at the government level. Although project implementation often helps relieve the pains of transition, the long-term goal for the advancement of women and gender equality are better met through overall national policies, plans and budgets which integrate women in their design.

Under-financing and lack of sustainability as a policy body within new state structures is perhaps the main reason why many national machineries in CEE countries and the CIS actually do implement projects. Pressure to show results, fear of restructuring and an inadequate long-term strategic vision for development, which many transition countries are facing, create a disabling environment for policy and upstream units, such as national machineries for gender equality. If gender is not considered a priority of national governments' strategic development objectives, in order to sustain themselves, national machineries are forced to compete with NGOs for funds, often provided by international donors, to implement projects.

E. Mechanisms to Hold Governments Accountable for Mainstreaming Gender

In order to hold governments accountable, the general public needs to be aware of the relevance of gender issues and have access to gender-disaggregated data concerning government performance. The Platform for Action states that governments should report "on a regular basis, to legislative bodies on the progress of efforts, as appropriate, to mainstream gender concerns..." (paragraph 109). In this respect, national machineries can play a pivotal role in holding governments accountable for mainstreaming gender into policies and programmes. New mechanisms should be developed, such as disaggregated statistics, performance indicators, expert scrutiny and regular public reporting.

Indicators and statistics, disaggregated by gender, are slowly emerging in transition countries, with "men and women in statistics" books starting to appear. The RBEC/UNDP, UN/ECE and the Swedish Statistical Agency have provided technical support to a number of CEE and CIS countries. The next step is to develop new methodologies to analyse gender statistics for planning purposes. There are currently few linkages between statisticians from state agencies who produce statistics and government users who plan the overall budget and develop policies. National machineries have a crucial role to play in this linkage. Bringing trends and numbers to the attention of policy makers will

enable them to advocate change and help them orient that change towards human development.

Governments in CEE countries and the CIS should be encouraged, with international support, to consider adopting gender budgeting, which requires ministries and agencies to disaggregate all outlays in terms of benefits to women and men in their budget documents. This process creates awareness for the differential allocation of resources to women and men and the differential impact of seemingly gender-neutral budgetary decisions. At the June 1999 workshop on gender budgeting organized in New York by the Gender in Development Programme of the UNDP, in collaboration with UNIFEM, the experiences of the Commonwealth States, United Kingdom, Australia and South Africa were examined. As a result, a website **/ was born which may prove useful in launching this process in CEE countries and the CIS.

National machineries can also draw on international agreements, such as the CEDAW or the Platform for Action, to further promote gender mainstreaming. Governments are not always aware of the type of commitments they have undertaken under the CEDAW or, as a result of recent world conferences, under the auspices of the United Nations. Since most CEE and CIS countries have ratified the CEDAW without reservation, they may need assistance reporting in a timely fashion. The reporting process is also an optimal opportunity to create a transparent dialogue with NGOs.

Parliaments can also play a role in ensuring government accountability. A number of national assemblies in CEE countries have created sub-commissions on gender to monitor the progress of gender mainstreaming. In order to address inequalities and hidden and overt discrimination in the labour market, a number of countries are also in the process of revising their legislation or the mechanisms for the monitoring of their implementation. In the region, Lithuania has been the only country where an Equal Opportunity Ombudsman, with a specific mandate to oversee the monitoring of the Equal Opportunities Act, has been established. Other countries are in the process of reviewing their legislation for gender-based discrimination and to propose additional legislation that will reverse the inequalities resulting from the transition to a market economy. Countries of the region should share these positive experiences together.

F. Human Resources

Where national commissions have advisory status, representatives of various ministries and NGOs are appointed by decree; the secretariat is made up of either the staff of one ministry or facilitated by UNDP project

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**/ http://www.undp.org/poverty/

personnel. Other institutional structures, such as government committees, have their own full-time staff. All organizational change is based on strong political will: the leadership's clear commitment to gender integration and the allocation of staff and financial resources. In general, when considering staffing of the national machineries, the following needs should be considered.

Staff should be selected based on their commitment and potential to pursue gender activities. In order to ensure efficiency, regular training should be provided for the staff in order to update their skills on:

- Gender in development, including gender analysis, mainstreaming and planning, and development of gender sensitive tools and procedures;
- Human rights and rights-based approaches to gender programming;
- Participatory consultation;
- Public relations;
- English language skills;
- Computer skills; and
- Fund raising.

It is necessary to develop specific work plans for all staff members, for which they are accountable individually and collectively. A system of accountability, incentives and requirements that enforce and encourage new policies and programmes should be a part of the work plans.

A gender-balanced staff in national machineries will render a more effective output. Good practices include the hiring of 50 per cent women and 50 per cent men, with male staff strategically selected for lobbying with parliament and other high officials.

High staff turnover in institutions also diminishes return in the long run. Efforts that organizations in the region put on building staff capacity are often lost when human resources leave for other jobs. This, of course, is inevitable in under-funded structures in transition. But all efforts should be made to keep a motivated staff over a critical period of time.

G. Funding and Sustainability of National Machineries

Lack of proper financing is the major problem of most national machineries in CEE countries and the CIS. Government bodies in transition countries generally suffer from under-funding. As they are not considered a priority in times of economic and political change, national machineries promoting the status of women are often the least-funded structures in governments. Gender concerns are directly related to the social and economic problems of transition. By allocating the appropriate attention and resources to them today, governments will avoid more serious and costly problems

tomorrow. This is why lobbying for their cause is essential. If governments realize that viewing programmes and policies through a gender lens, especially in the transition period, would in the long term benefit their countries, machineries would have less sustainability problems. As it remains now, however, many governments see these functions as secondary and count on donor assistance to fund machineries for the advancement of women and gender equality. The main goal of these machineries is often perceived regionally as helping governments fulfil their international commitments.

In order to ensure the existence of structures capable of making a difference, governments are recommended to finance national machineries in a sustainable manner via national budgets. The state budget should cover the core operational costs of national machineries, which should have the possibility of fundraising additional resources for specific programmes. At the same time, however, the sustainability of national machineries depends on their ability to convince policy makers and budget planners of the importance of gender equality for just and efficient growth. The ideals of gender equality, therefore, should not be seen as an external imposition, sustained by donor funds, but as an integral part of development in CEE countries and the CIS.

The sustainability of the national machineries, in effect, depends on their ability to:

- Create a vision and strategy of their sustainable future based on a realistic assessment of their capacity;
- Attract specialists from both sexes and from various disciplines who can analyse gender trends on the basis of gender statistics;
- Convince governments of the importance of gender planning and the allocation of resources to gender programmes; and
- Network successfully with NGOs and the media to disseminate the message.

H. Links of National Machineries with Civil Society

Establishing strong links with civil society has many benefits for national machineries. Not only do they need the strength and support of NGOs to carry out their mandate and to gain legitimacy when negotiating with the government, but they can also provide much needed support to NGOs. Such support need not be financial. National machineries can be the channels through which NGOs dialogue with governments; they can also engage civil society to be the implementing partners of government programmes.

Pressure from women's movements, especially in CEE countries (and from the international community on the eve of the Beijing Conference in 1995), has played a key role in establishing national machineries. In CEE countries, NGOs

play a crucial role in pressuring governments to place women on the agenda – especially NGO networks that have gained knowledge and experience in lobbying. The Karat Coalition – representing NGOs from Albania, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Poland, Romania, Russian Federation, Slovakia and Ukraine – affirms that, without NGO pressure, most countries would not have national machineries or NAPs.

In the CIS, however, and especially in Central Asia, the women's movement is only now "graduating" to the lobbying level. Much work still remains to prepare NGOs to voice the needs of women at the grassroots level. An effective partnership between NGOs and national machineries requires not only that NGOs know how to lobby but also that national machineries incorporate NGO demands in their programmes.

The process of elaborating and implementing NAPs has highlighted the regional cooperation between NGOs and national machineries. When able to consult NGOs in designing the NAPs, governments better ensured their implementation and the cooperation of civil society. When this dialogue did not take place, national machineries failed to create a national consensus. Their programmes were devoid of the concrete support civil society had to offer for the implementation of NAPs.

Linkages between national machineries and NGOs in CEE countries and the CIS are sometimes made possible by NGO umbrella organizations or by bodies that coordinate input to governments from NGOs. The KARAT coalition, a network created in 1997, and one of the strongest networks in the region, periodically reminds governments in the CEE region about their international commitments. Some governments in the region have established a permanent forum for consultations with NGOs. In Hungary, the Civil Forum comments on government policies and can initiate new programmes. In Slovakia, Georgia and Kazakhstan, among others, NGO representatives are members of the national machinery. In Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, the partnership between NGO groups and the Government is exemplary.

Establishing a division of responsibility among national machineries and NGOs is of utmost importance. This is especially true in transition countries where the memory of a single party's stifling monopolistic rule of grassroots initiatives is still quite vivid. National machineries may encounter resistance if they choose to "overlook", "coordinate" or assimilate women's NGOs. In the nascent civil society of CEE countries and the CIS, new relationships need fostering based on partnerships and divisions of responsibilities for the advancement of mutual goals. Cooperation between the region's NGOs and national machineries, in the meantime, needs strengthening.

In order to strengthen its links with NGOs representing diverse women's groups, national machineries within governments should:

- Consult with major NGOs on national and international policy related to women and gender. In some countries, already existing NGO umbrella organizations aggregate the views of many women's groups. In other countries, formation of such coalitions is a fairly new concept;
- Involve NGOs representing diverse groups of women in the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action, the state reports to the CEDAW and in delegations to international meetings, such as the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW);
- Strengthen the voice of women's advocacy groups through funding or by publicly acknowledging the importance of their work and organizing fundraising activities for them; and
- Establish formal channels of communication, such as regular participation of national machineries in NGO organized conferences and appointment of NGO representatives to boards and councils.

I. Outreach and Links with Other Political Systems

One main obstacle national machineries face in CEE countries and the CIS is the lack of gender knowledge and commitment among government officials and parliamentarians. Gender is considered "non-relevant" in areas such as economy, defence or energy. But gender "training" is a continuous process. To be sustainable, it requires thorough follow-up. Governments should train their judiciary and legislative bodies in gender equality and in the respect of women's human rights – especially those institutions responsible for combatting violence and the trafficking in women.

National machineries should also foster programmes that encourage partnership between women and men and engage men in changing traditional roles. Very often, national machineries, even those working on equality issues, fail to actively involve men in their work. They must ensure that women and men at the local level benefit from their policies and make all efforts to channel information and resources to sub-national and local levels.

Sub-regional, regional and global exchanges of information are also crucial for the improved performance of national machineries. Given similarities in the paths to transition, the sharing of good practices and bottlenecks beyond national borders is crucial to avoid mistakes when planning new structures. Many national machineries lack know-how, especially when it concerns mainstreaming gender, and need to build on other countries' experiences by adapting them to their own cultural context. More contact is therefore needed between national machineries of CEE countries and the CIS and beyond.

In order to expand support in civil society for their mandate, national machineries should:

- Cooperate with the mass media to raise public awareness of gender equality by, for example, highlighting issues such as violence against women or women's health through television, radio, theatre and the print media;
- Develop and use electronic media to disseminate information on women's situation and to network with civil society organizations, with other gender units in government, and with national machineries of other countries;
- Inform civil society of international agreements in the area of women and gender equality and the outcomes of major UN conferences;
- Organize conferences that bring together researchers, policy makers and advocacy groups to facilitate exchange of experiences and networking;
- Develop a comprehensive and detailed work plan and distribute it among NGOs and other institutions to enable coordination of activities;
- Reach out to provinces, regions and villages to create a sense of networking, support, and coordination; and
- Publish newspapers, magazines or newsletters with regular information on ministries, donors and NGOs.

J. International Cooperation and Support

The responsibility of international organizations, especially the United Nations, is critical in developing an international consensus on the importance of national machineries.

Since 1994, through its regional and national projects in CEE countries and the CIS in an attempt to build governments' capacity to design and implement gender policies, the UNDP has supported the creation of Gender in Development or Women in Development Units either within governments or under the auspices of them. These Units act as bridges between the activities of women's NGOs and the policies and programmes of governments. The Units, established as part of UNDP projects, should now be integrated in the region's governments. UNDP support was a catalyst for sustaining nascent national machineries and state gender policies. It is now important for national governments to take ownership of these processes and ensure their sustainability.

The UNDP Regional Gender Project has also provided a framework for establishing networks of women's organizations in the region and has initiated an on-going debate on gender issues. It includes cooperation with national statistical agencies to develop gender statistics and with researchers to analyse the status of women in the region's countries. The next phase of the

regional programme, beginning in 2000, will provide policy support for gender issues as an integral part of governance and socio-economic programmes within a regional framework. In different CEE and CIS countries, in the meantime, UNDP Country Offices will continue their cooperation with national machineries.

The concrete support that the UNDP Regional Bureau for Europe and the CIS with its Country Offices in CEE countries and the CIS have provided to national machineries since 1994 has included:

- Technical support;
- Training and Study tours;
- Strategy writing and programming;
- Organization of conferences and seminars;
- Reporting on the Beijing follow-up and on the CEDAW;
- Development of gender statistics and their dissemination; and
- Strengthened gender analytical capacities.

In addition to this continued support, the UN system must plan further assistance to national machineries collectively, including field offices of the UNDP, UNICEF, UNIFEM, UNHCR, UNFPA, UNESCO and others in the region. The UN system, with its EU partners, needs to consolidate its efforts in preparing national machineries for the Beijing +5 Review in the year 2000 and report on progress made on international commitments, such as CEDAW. Further support is needed, especially in assisting national machineries to:

1. Develop methodologies for gender statistics development and analysis for planning and programming, in collaboration with national statistics agencies ;
2. Encourage governments to develop gender budgeting and provide technical assistance for the elaboration of methodologies;
3. Integrate NAPs into the overall development plans of the region;
4. Develop new indicators for mapping progress in gender mainstreaming;
5. Train government officials in gender mainstreaming and gender analysis;
6. Establish regular sub-region, regional and global networking between national machineries, in order to facilitate the exchange of experience and the dissemination of best practices;
7. Establish electronic networks and technical capacities for designing web-sites and linking national machineries across regions; and
8. Help governments and parliaments in their reporting responsibilities to monitor the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and CEDAW.

The donor community, in the meantime, can only support the processes which, ideally, should begin and end with national governments working on national priorities in partnership with civil societies in CEE countries and the CIS. Activities that promote the advancement of women and gender equality should not be limited to the fulfilment of international commitments. If gender is not considered a priority for efficient development and as basic rights of the transition process, the efforts of many committed people will be in vain.

APPENDIX

National Machineries in the CIS/CEE
Prepared by the Regional Bureau for Europe and the CIS (RBEC/UNDP)
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Country	Date of establish-ment	Highest Present Government Level
Albania	1998	Women and Family Committee at the Prime Minister's Office. The previously established (1993) Department for Women and Family in the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection was up-graded and moved in 1998 to the Prime Minister's Office in order to better equip it with the overall coordinating function and improve its relation and coordination of activities with the line ministries. Its mandate is to coordinate the implementation of the national platform and initiate further legislative action, in addition to gender mainstreaming policies.
Armenia	1997	The National Commission on Gender in Development Policy, an Advisory Committee chaired by the Minister of Social Security. The Inter-Agency Commission was established with the purpose of coordinating all activities related to gender in development policy and monitoring of implementation of the National Plan for Action.
Azerbaijan	1998	The State Committee for Women's Issues. The State Committee was established By Presidential Decree in 1998 in order to elaborate and implement the National Plan for Action, with a mandate along four lines: democratisation of women's movement; promotion of women's participation in social life; involvement of women's creative and intellectual potentials in Azerbaijan's development; social rehabilitation of disadvantaged groups of women.
Belarus		The Family and Gender Issues Department of the Ministry of Social Welfare is responsible for all activities concerning the advancement of women, including the National Plan of Action , improving existing legislation, strengthening the partnerships with NGOs, and implementing the Programme "Women of the Republic of Belarus".
Bulgaria	-	There is no central coordinating mechanism, but there are focal points established in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and in the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy that are responsible for monitoring gender issues;
Bosnia and Herzegovina	-	There is no government structure established, however in 1998 a decision was taken by a Reference Group for Gender Strategy, in cooperation with the Prime Ministers of both Bosnia and Herzegovina entities: Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Republica Srpska, to start building institutional capacity for gender equality.

Czech Republic	1998	The Department of Equality of Women and Men at the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs
Croatia	1996	The Commission of the Government of the Republic of Croatia for Equality. Established in 1996 within the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare, the Commission coordinates the implementation of the Platform of Action and of the National Policy of the Republic of Croatia for the Promotion of Equality which was adopted in 1997.
Estonia	1996	The Bureau of Equality in the Ministry of Social and Family Affairs regularly disseminates information and data to politicians, civil servants, NGOs and other groups for increased awareness on gender issues. It has come up with the initiative to develop the Gender Equality Act in cooperation with the Parliament. Another initiative is to develop a network of civil servants, which is being considered as preparatory work for forming a national commission on gender equality issues.
Georgia	1998	The State Commission on the Elaboration of the State Policy for Women in Development issues, under the leadership of the Head of the Security Council of Georgia, was established by Presidential Decree with the aim to achieve gender equality in society and monitor the implementation of the National Action Plan
Hungary	1998	The Office for Equal Opportunities in the Social Community Relations Department coordinates the on-going work on the assessment of legal regulations on the equal rights of women and their enforcement mechanisms and raises public awareness on gender equality issues. The basic studies summing up the investigations are available in the form of a handbook "Equal opportunities and law harmonisation".
Kazakhstan	1998	The National Commission on Family and Women Affairs was recently established under the Office of the President, chaired by a former Senator with present ministerial rank. Created with the purpose of developing and monitoring the NAP, and the advancement of women through the promotion of women in decision making; economy; family issues; rights and violence; work with NGOs; and the mass media.
Kyrgyzstan	1996	The State Commission for Family, Youth and Women's Affairs was created by special Presidential decree for the implementation of the "Ayalzad" programme, the National Action Plan. The Commission also has the mandate to protect women's interests and their full participation in development priorities. A National Council on Gender Policy was also established for promoting gender equality and monitoring the implementation of the Ayalzad Programmes.
Latvia	1999	Gender Equality Focal Point at the Ministry of Welfare

Lithuania	1996	The Advisor to the Government on Women and Family Issues was replaced in 1996 with the State Counsellor on Foreign Relations and Relations with NGOs of the Prime Minister's Office, that has under her responsibility also gender equality issues; additionally in 1998 the Division of Gender Questions in the Department of Statistics, the post of the State Counsellor on Human Rights as well as the Ministerial Consulting Group, comprising the representatives of six ministries, were established; and in 1999 an institution of the Ombudsperson on Equal Opportunities of Women and Men was created
Malta	1989	Parliamentary Secretary for Women's Rights within the Office of the Prime Minister
Poland	1997	The Office of the Government Plenipotentiary for Family and Women was replaced with the Office of the Plenipotentiary for Family in 1997; This body reports to the Parliament and has the authority to initiate legislation.
Republic of Moldova	1999	Division for Family Protection at the Ministry of Labour, Social Protection and the Family is the primary government agency responsible for implementing the National Plan of Action and reporting to the Parliament.
Romania	1996	Department for the Advancement of Women and Family Policies at the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection. The activities of the Department includes the drafting of the Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men that was submitted to the Parliament as well as drafting the Law on Paternal Leave, also submitted to the Parliament.
Russian Federation	1996	The National Mechanism to implement Beijing and the National Plan for Action is the Commission for Improvement of Women's Status (CIWS), chaired by the Vice Prime Minister responsible for social issues. In addition, Commissions and Committees on Women and Children are established in the Office of the President, Federal Assembly and in the local Governments. Within the Parliament, the fraction Women in Russia overlooks the development of a legislative system, controls over realisation of the Convention of CEDAW and strengthens family orientation of government social policies.
Slovakia		In addition to the Department of Equal Opportunities of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family, the Coordinating Committee on Women's Issues established in 1996 maintains its activities.
Slovenia	1992	Women's Policy Office of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia evaluates the status of women and implements laws dealing with gender equality. The WPO can introduce new legislation to the Parliament.
Tajikistan	1991 and 1998	The Women's Committee of the Government is the main National Machinery for the Improvement of the Status of Women. In addition, by Presidential Decree, in 1998, a National Commission on the Realisation of the National Plan for Action was created as an Inter-Agency group.

The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia		Unit for Development of Gender Equality at the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy.
Turkey	1990	The Directorate General on the Status and Problems of Women (DGPSW) was established as a national mechanism to develop and implement policies regarding women. The Directorate General has been working under the State Ministry for Women Affairs and Social Services since 1991. At present, the draft law for the restructuring of the Directorate General is on the agenda of the Turkish Government. The enactment of the draft law will provide greater opportunities to this office in terms of budget and personnel.
Turkmenistan	1998	At the moment, there is no national machinery at the Government level, although the Head of the Women's Union and the former Deputy Speaker of the Parliament is Head of Inter-agency Coordination Council, established with the purpose of elaborating and implementing the NAP. The Draft NAP calls for the creation of a Government Women's Committee by Presidential Decree and awaits approval.
Ukraine	1. 1993 2. 1996	The two national machineries are (1) Section on Women Affairs and Family, Maternity and Childhood of the Cabinet of Ministers and (2) Ministry of Family and Youth Affairs
Uzbekistan	1995	The Women's Committee of Uzbekistan, headed by the Deputy Prime Minster is the main National Machinery, with the purpose of advocating for women's rights and execution of programmes for their advancement. In addition, a Secretariat on Social Protection of Family, Motherhood and Childhood has been established in the Cabinet of Ministers. The Ombudsman, although not having direct Equal Opportunity mandate, is actively involved in the monitoring of the CEDAW convention at the national and regional level.
Yugoslavia		Given the political situation of Yugoslavia over the period after the Beijing Conference the national machinery there has not been developed.

Source: UNDP *National Reports on the status of Women;* Information from Gender Focal Points of UNDP Country Offices, *Gender in Development: Handbook for CEE and Baltic States* (UNDP), UNDP/RBEC *Sub-Regional GID Bulletin for Central Asia, the Caucasus and Turkey* (Issue No. 3, Spring 1999).